BOOK REVIEWS

BENJAMIN SILLIMAN—PATHFINDER IN AMERICAN SCIENCE. By John F. Fulton and Elizabeth H. Thomson—(Recommended by the Book-of-the-Month Club.) Henry Schuman. Price $4.00.

Fulton and Thomson bring forth in the biography of Benjamin Silliman the spirit and character of a great American pioneer educator in the field of the physical and natural sciences. Silliman, a graduate of Yale, became its first Professor of Chemistry, and, like the true pioneer, went abroad with pistols, sherry and brandy, and some of Yale's money, to do the promethean task of bringing back the scientific culture of the old world to the young university of the new world. The journals and logs of his travels were extremely popular, highly praised and widely read in his time. Silliman was a beloved member of the faculty, his lectures the object of much discussion, and his practical experiments before his classes impressed the principles of chemistry on many generations of Yale students, all of whom learned to love him.

He was a responsible force in the organization of the Yale Medical School (1813), and established the American Journal of Science (1818). He was an important figure in the organization of many artistic and cultural endeavors in his native ambient. Silliman was in the vanguard of the progressive movement in science and was the moving spirit in the development of the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale, from which, in the past century, have stemmed many outstanding contributions to physiology, biochemistry and nutrition.

The chapter on the early medical schools of America brings forth an interesting account of the problems which beset the medical educator in the beginning of the 19th Century, at which time only 10 per cent of the persons practicing medicine had received a medical degree from a responsible college, and less than 2 per cent obtained their degrees in America.

This biography offers another link in the history of American men of science. The publisher has presented the book in a pleasing and readable format.

* * *

HODGKIN'S DISEASE. Jackson and Parker, Oxford University Press, New York. Price $6.50.

Ever since the time of Thomas Hodgkin, doctors have been trying to bring some order into that group of obscure disorders featured by lymphnode and often splenic enlargement. Under the heading of Hodgkin's Disease and Allied Disorders, Jackson and Parker once more undertake this task. Parker and Jackson divide the group into Hodgkin's Disease, reticulum cell, sarcoma, lymphocytoma and lymphoblastoma, lymphosarcoma, giant-follicle lymphoma, plasmocytoma and endothelioma. It can hardly be said that a final clarification of the subject is achieved, especially since Hodgkin's Disease is further subdivided into Hodgkin's paragranuloma, Hodgkin's granuloma, and Hodgkin's sarcoma, the first two apparently possessing the features of an infection and the latter those of a malignant tumor. At the same time all seem to be successive stages of one process. The authors emphasize the presence of Reed-Sternberg cells as necessary for the diagnosis of all forms of Hodgkin's Disease.

Etiology, pathology, clinical features, and treatment of the various conditions all are discussed; there are excellent photomicrographs of the lesions, bibliographies, and index. It is of interest that no reference is made to the excellent monograph of L. T. Webster which appeared in 1922 on Lymphosarcoma and Allied Conditions. Not everyone will agree with all the writers' views but at the moment this monograph is probably the best summary of the subject, coming as it does from the pen of men who have wide first-hand experience with this perplexing group of disorders.

* * *

HISTORY OF MEDICINE. By Cecilia C. Mettler, edited by Fred A. Mettler. Illustrated. The Blakiston Company, 1947. Price $8.50.

Mettler's History of Medicine fills the great need for a book giving much on the works of numerous men throughout the history of medicine. It is a readable, comprehensive text on medical history arranged to trace the development of various branches of medicine, thereby making the subject of greater interest to the student and teacher.

This book of Mettler's shows evidence of long, painstaking work and can be compared to only one other work, now out of print, namely, Garrison's History of Medicine. Garrison's book was satisfactory for some 30 years, combining usually a portrait with the description of an individual's contribution in science and medicine. Mettler's work, because of its arrangement, gains much in having chapters such as the Anatomy of the Seventeenth Century, in which for instance on page 66 is an account of Thomas Willis and his contribution to anatomy. However, mention of other of his contributions is scattered through the book, appearing under such headings as Physiology of the 17th Century, Neurology and Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Surgery, Ophthalmology, and finally, on page 1087, under Rhinolaryngology. Although it is nice to have Willis, his portrait and his contributions all mentioned in one place in Garrison, yet Mettler's arrangement makes it a more readable text with the material so organized as to meet the needs of the specialist who is interested in a certain field, such as the lymphatics, or bacteriology.

It is curious and disconcerting that in Mettler's book such artists as Christian Koeck, and certain contemporaries of the reviewer who have written articles about men long dead, should have their names as authors in the same heavy bold face type as the names of their illustrious subjects. In fact the first name in heavy type to be encountered in Mettler's text, on page 5, is Georg Sticker (1860-), and not the name J. Aesculapius!

Although indexed as appearing on page 4, Smith's papyrus is not mentioned until page 282 under physical diagnosis. The subtitles of subdivisions of the chapters could be in a more contrasting type. Chinese, Hindu and Japanese medicine are not covered so well as in Garrison's book.

In the Editor's preface is the excuse for not having the illustrative material that would have made this book outstanding. If the illustrations of Garrison had only been added, Mettler's book would be the most valuable and illustrious history of medicine.

Mettler's History of Medicine can be recommended as the best of single volume books available. If one could secure a Garrison, then these two books would give the best on the history of medicine.

* * *

THE LOUSE: An Account of the Lice Which Infest Man, Their Medical Importance and Control. By Patrick A. Buxton, Baltimore, The Williams & Wilkins Company, 1946.

The first edition of "The Louse," which was published nearly eight years ago, was a standard book to the medical entomologist. In the revised edition completed in 1945, and

thus including the published work only up to the end of 1944, the extensive advances in knowledge of the louse achieved during the war years are fully recorded. Every one of the chapters dealing with the anatomy, biology, medical importance and control of lice has been enriched by new facts. The sensory physiology and behavior under controlled conditions are fully described. Data on the lethal effect of high temperature on eggs and on the distribution of lice in various seams and regions of clothing are extensive. The entomology of typhus and relapsing fever is presented in clear and concise form. Rickettsia mooseri is described as Rickettsia muricola. (In the new edition of Bergey's "Manual of Determinative Bacteriology" it is christened Rickettsia typhi!)

In the chapter on means of control of lice, the spectacular progress made in that field is reflected. The uses and methods of application of DDT and other insecticides are detailed. Evidence presented in Chapter 6 supports the view that the head louse and body louse are well-defined biological races. An appendix details the rearing and feeding of lice. At the conclusion of the book over 230 references are listed.

Although the revised edition is nearly half again as long as the first edition, the book remains unchanged in size and weight because of deterioration of the quality of the paper and binding.

* * *

140 MILLION PATIENTS. By Carl Malmberg, Public Relations Advisor, Information Specialist for U.S.P.H.S. and Chief Investigator for U. S. Senate Subcommittee on Health and Education. (Pepper.)

Those who acclaim this book include: Allen M. Butler, John P. Peters, Ernst P. Boas, Channing Frothingham, Claude Pepper, Herman Kabat.

There is an old adage that says, "Birds of a feather—." The book itself seems dedicated to three major premises, unstated but developed in detail.

1. That present medical care in the U.S.A. is a failure.
2. That any voluntary approach to the problem would fail.
3. That Compulsory Health Insurance such as the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill sought is the only answer.

The first principle of logic, that any argument based on false premises still remains false in toto no matter how cleverly developed, seems to have been missed entirely by the author. The possibility that his major premises are false is nowhere admitted in the book, indeed such a thought apparently never entered his mind. In developing his first major premise he quotes statistics to show that U. S. is ninth in health. Australia, New Zealand, Uruguay, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, and Netherlands, he says, are better. He does not call attention to the facts that:

1. Australia, New Zealand, Uruguay and Canada are essentially pioneer countries with sturdy, strong stock with concentration of population factors and climate differing greatly from the U.S.A.
2. Iceland, Denmark and Norway are countries essentially with long cold climatic conditions curtailing diseases spread easily in warm countries with poor sewage disposal and sanitary facilities.

That Germany, Russia and England, with many of the factors common to the U.S.A., rank far below the U.S.A. in health even though they have had the advantages (?) of compulsory health insurance laws for years, is a fact that the author seems loath to bring out. Among other things in the steady stream of false interpretation of statistics is that of the findings of the U.S.A. Selective Service. The proper evaluation of these figures as analyzed by Goin, Bortz and many others have been ignored—perhaps because these men explode the myth and place the onus where it should rest.

Interestingly enough then the author goes on to show that really the greatest cause of illness is poverty and that money is the only common denominator. Then slyly he admits that a change in the economic status of the people would be the direct and proper way to attack the problem and that if the people were on better financial footing the problem would be solved. But he decides that such a method is too great a problem and does not fit in with the plans of those who have other ideas and therefore we should attack the enemy through a side entrance apparently hoping to destroy illness by hampering the efforts of the medical profession and fighting anything except poverty. He quotes Falk, Klem, and Sinai. Again, "Birds of feather—." A pet "peeve" seems to be held against individual practitioners or family doctors. He intimates that group practice is the only efficient way to practice medicine—that your doctor wastes your time, your money, and your health. Is it that he fears the "milk of human kindness" that proverbially has flowed from the family doctor whose patients love him and ask his advice when political schemers attempt to "put over" a Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill, or a Warren Bill?

Malmberg wails loudly against "A.M.A. tactics" apparently because these "tactics" have so far preserved for Americans some of their freedoms. Is it because these tactics do not "set well" with the bureaucratic domination theme?

The author depreciates all efforts along voluntary lines to answer the problem. He reverberates the old cliché and cry of "too little and too late" apparently ignoring that even when foolish leaders in their "hey day" sought to hide their own shortcomings and lack of vision, the great American people came through with "enough and in time."

He ends his book with the statement that the 140 million people can't be wrong. He draws the deduction therefore that Americans will embrace his schemes and live happily and healthily ever after. Even this premise could be false. An old ditty often quoted, said in part:

"He was right, dead right as he strode along,
But he's just as dead as if he were wrong."

The book, however, is fairly well written—appeals to those people who relish discord and demagogic attacks, and is an expertly drawn propaganda document. Therein lies its danger. It should be read by Doctors of Medicine if only to be able to answer the ridiculous fallacies that readers of the book will otherwise accept.

* * *

PLAGUE. By Arthur N. Foxe. The Hobson Book Press, 1947. Price, $2.50.

This volume of 122 pages, under the title of "Plague," deals with the life of René Théophile Hyacinthe Laënnec (1782-1826), the "inventor of the stethoscope and father of modern medicine." The old term for tuberculosis, "white plague," was abbreviated to the somewhat misleading term, "plague." In its present form the book represents the second edition of a very limited first issue of six copies which appeared in 1930. Aided by the review of a large mass of literature, poems, letters of the Laënnec correspondence and the carrier correspondence of the well-known author, Dr. Arthur N. Foxe, associate managing editor of the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, has developed a very commendable biography of Laënnec. Short and pointed sentences depict his life and the familial relations in Brittany, his love for nature and his relentless studies and work in Paris under the shadow of the "tubercle," and economic difficulties. "Medicine and medicine and medicine—hour upon hour, upon hour." "The wards—flesh without destiny, not knowing in what world it would get its next sustenance. The autopsy—flesh with destiny." These few samples of the style should invite many to read this delightful book. Through his correspondence one is led to appreciate the nervous, restless, modest personality, endowed with generous, tolerant and refined feelings.